warehousing facilities to the farmers, the CWC offers such facilities at warehouses at different locations in the country. CWC is operating 62 warehouses with the total storage capacity of 14.74 lakh MT, including hired capacity of 3.44 lakh MT (As on 1.2.2008) in the State of Maharashtra, where alongwith foodgrains storage, general and other notified commodities are stored. Maharashtra State Warehousing Corporation (MSWC) is having a total storage capacity of 11.68 lakh MT (including hired capacity of 0.61 lakh MT) at 167 different rural and urban centres to provide proper warehousing facilities to farmers to avoid the post harvest losses of produce. MSWC keeps 25% storage space reserved for storage of the foodgrain of farmers to avoid post harvest losses and to preserve the marketable surplus of farmers till the desirable price returns. The MSWC is also giving rebate of 35% to the farmers in the storage charges of the commodities stored by them, besides giving a rebate of 50% to SC/ST farmers in the State.

Allocation of rice to Chhattisgarh

†3443. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) the total rice allocated to Chhattisgarh State by the Central Government in year 2006-07 for distribution under Public Distribution System;

(b) whether the quantity of rice to be allocated to Chhattisgarh in year 2007-08 is far less than the earlier one; and

(c) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) The details of the allocation of rice for the State of Chhattisgarh during the year 2006-07 and 2007-08 are as follows:

(In lakh tons)

Commodity	2006-07	2007-08
Rice	14.80	7.74

(c) While the allocations of foodgrains for accepted numbers of AAY and BPL families are made @ 35 kg. per family per month, the allocations for APL category are made depending upon the availability of stocks of foodgrains in the Central Pool. Therefore, keeping in view the low procurement of rice, the allocation of rice for the APL category was rationalized for 2007-08, w.e.f. April, 2007, for all the States/UTs, including Chhattisgarh, on the basis of offtake during previous 3 years i.e. 2003-04, 2004-05 and 2005-06.

Rise in prices of Edible Oils

†3444. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ:
SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi

(a) whether it is a fact that the prices of edible oils have increased exorbitantly in the last two months;

(b) if so, the reasons of such exorbitant rise and the details thereof; and

(c) what efforts are being made to decrease the prices of edible oils?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) No, Sir. The domestic wholesale prices of main edible oils as on 21 21.4.2008 compared to 21.2.2008 are on the decline (except Coconut Oil) as may be seen from the table given below:—

(Rs. per quintal)

Name of Oil/Centre	Prices as on 21.04.2008	Prices as on 21.02.2008	% variation
Soyabean Oil (Mumbai)	5340.0	5500.0	-2.91
Mustard Oil (Delhi)	5660.0	5850.0	-3.25
Groundnut Oil (Mumbai)	6700.0	7150.0	-6.29
Sunflower Oil (Mumbai)*	6600.0	8210.0	-19.61
Cottonseed Oil (Delhi)	5550.0	5600.0	-0.89
Sesame Oil (Mumbai)	8000.0	8000.0	0.00
Coconut Oil (Cochi)	6100.0	5400.0	12.96
Vanaspati (Delhi)**	920.0	935.0	-1.63
RBD Palmolein (Mumbai)	5400.0	5620.0	-3.91

* Refined

** 15kg. pack

(c) Some of the steps taken recently to contain the prices of edible oils are:—

(i) w.e.f. 1st April, 2008, the customs duty on crude and refined forms of palm oil, palmolein, palm kernel oil, soyabean oil, rapeseed/mustard oil, sunflower oil, safflower oil, groundnut oil, coconut oil & some other vegetable oils has been reduced to zero and 7.5% respectively.

(ii) Export of all edible oils had been banned w.e.f. 17.3.2008. However, coconut oil from Kochi Port and oils from minor forest produce have been exempted from the ban w.e.f. 1.4.2008.

(iii) The Government has kept in abeyance the Removal of (Licensing Requirements, Stock Limits and Movement Restriction) on Specified Foodstuffs Order, 2002 for certain commodities including edible oils and edible oilseeds in respect of their purchase, movement, sale, supply, distribution or storage for sale for a period of one year.

(iv) A Scheme for Distribution of Subsidized Imported Edible Oils through the State Governments/UTs has been introduced.

Empowering consumers against sub-standard goods

3445. SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is thinking of empowering consumers against sub-standard goods, by enactment of laws which would include critical product liability clause, making erring manufacturers and suppliers liable to pay punitive damages;

(b) if so, whether the rules under the Food Safety Act also bring in standards for packaged food items, etc.; and

(c) whether Food Regulatory Authority would be empowered adequately to immediately take care of aggrieved consumers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) No Sir.

(b) and (c) As informed by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 empowers the consumers to lift the samples for getting it analysed as well as to launch the prosecution against offenders in the court of law if the sample is found adulterated. The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India being established under the said Act is empowered to lay down standards for articles of food and to regulate their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and import as well as labelling provisions. The Act also provides for payment of compensation to the consumers in case of injury or death of the consumer caused due to consumption of food.

Reduction in allocation of foodgrains to Kerala

2346. PROF. P.J. KURIEN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government has reduced the quantity of foodgrains allcoated to Kerala for distribution through Public Distribution System;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government of Kerala has objected to such a move; and

(d) if so, Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) The Central Government makes allocation of foodgrains under Targeted Public Distribution